

The MAP Task Force

Recap to Date

- We were tasked with determining if it is possible to move toward our higher education goals by addressing some concerns that have surfaced with the present system of allocating MAP grants.
- MAP currently is allocated on the basis of need determined by subtracting student resources from the college cost of attendance. But the cost of attendance hasn't been updated for a decade.
- Awards are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. This worked well for many years, but increasing demand for the program, coupled with increases in tuition and fees that outstripped increases in appropriations for the program have resulted in awards that are often too small going to less than half the students who need them.
- At the same time, the focus of the program has expanded from simply providing access to higher education for lower income students to getting students through their programs and becoming part of the credentialed workforce Illinois needs for the future.

Making MAP Better – SJR 69

- **“ISAC shall convene a task force to deliberate options for the adoption of new rules for MAP, with the goal of improving the outcomes for students who receive these awards...”**
- The resolution explicitly specified some ways to improve student outcomes that the task force should consider:
 - (1) improving partnerships between state and institutions in delivering both financial assistance and academic support to MAP recipients; and
 - (2) improving the effectiveness of MAP grants in enhancing program completion. These changes should not impede each institution’s special mission.

Concepts to be Considered mentioned in Resolution

- Basing institutional eligibility for MAP grants, in part, on an institution's ability to improve its MAP-grant students' progress towards a degree or its MAP-grant degree completion rate
- Basing a student's eligibility for a MAP grant, in part, on the student's ability to demonstrate that he or she is achieving academic success and making progress
- Basing institutional eligibility for MAP grants, in part, on an institution's ability to demonstrate that it is a partner with this state and the institution is providing financial aid to students from its own resources

Combining Task Force Goals and State Goals for Higher Education

STATE GOALS

- 60% BY 2025
- Achievement Gap <10%



Improved Outcomes Identified in Task Force

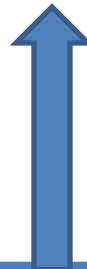
- Increase access
- Increase graduation rates
- Increase the number of degrees
- Lower total debt levels
- Reduce time to completion

Main SJR 69 GOAL
“improve outcomes for students”



Changes must be:

- Good for students
- Good for taxpayers
- Easy to administer



Other SJR 69 GOALS

- improve partnerships between state and institutions in delivering both financial assistance and academic support to MAP recipients; and
- Improve the effectiveness of MAP grants in enhancing program completion. These changes should not impede each institution’s special mission.

SJR 69 Concepts to be Considered

- Basing institutional eligibility for MAP grants, on an institution’s ability to improve its MAP-grant students’ progress towards a degree
- Basing a student’s eligibility for a MAP grant, on the student’s ability to demonstrate that s/he is making progress
- Basing institutional eligibility for MAP grants, on an institution’s ability to demonstrate that it is a partner with this state and the institution is providing financial aid to students from its own resources

The task force considered many options suggested by the resolution, the task force, IBHE, ICCB, the legislature, other Illinois entities and other states

- Prioritize MAP based on EFC
- HS to College merit components
- Impose higher SAP requirements
- Flexible selection processes
- Extend processing for late filers
- Summer MAP
- Increasing the size of the MAP award
- Steering high risk students to cc's
- Increase size of first year grants
- Coordinate with Federal grants
- "Time-out" for students who fail
- No MAP for remedial, w/d or failed classes
- Developing advising and financial partnerships with schools
- Reward higher performing schools

Prioritize MAP based on EFC

- Current system uses first come, first-served, based on FAFSA application date
- Prioritizing based on EFC requires setting a cut-off date and then giving MAP grants on the basis of EFC.
- To meet appropriation levels, either a secondary cut-off mechanism is needed or awards need to be cut to stay under the appropriation
- Task force members did not express much enthusiasm for this option at the state level; using it at the school level was better received.

Add a merit component

- HS to College merit components
 - were almost universally disliked, with task force members believing that they would increase inequity and reduce diversity.
- Impose higher SAP requirements
 - Were also disliked because the Feds have just increased SAP requirements and they haven't had time to work
- Flexible selection process
 - Using more subtle qualifications for MAP such as interviews, writing, courses taken, etc. Hard to implement at state level; would be possible at school level

Accommodate different types of students

- Extend processing for late filers
 - Many task force members were in favor of setting aside some money for late filers, especially independent students at community colleges
 - No agreement on where the dollars to pay for the program would come from
- Summer MAP
 - Summer MAP can reduce time to degree. Idea did not generate much discussion. One problem mentioned in the past was that the dollars were taken away from “regular” MAP.

Reduce debt, especially for students who do not complete

- Increase size of the award
 - Expensive but may increase retention
 - No strong support; no proposal for where the dollars come from.
- Steer high risk students to cc's
 - Considered discriminatory
- Increase size of first year grants
 - Could increase retention but is expensive. No identified way to pay for the increase.


Improve “Efficiency” of MAP

Remember: MAP is only efficient if it changes behavior.


- Coordinate with Federal grants
 - Students can get up to \$5,500 in Federal Pell Grants.
 - Might be enough for dependent cc students; community colleges disagreed
- “Time-out” for students who fail at one school and want to transfer to another
 - Idea generally accepted by task force
- No MAP for remedial, w/d or failed classes
 - Could create unpaid balance deterring completion or transfer.
 - Not paying for remedial could deny aid to those that need it most

Emphasizing School Performance

- Developing partnerships with schools
 - School contributions to MAP were modeled. Some benchmarking and acknowledgment of contributions of schools considered.
 - Schools could also participate as partners through academic and financial aid advising. Several task force members suggested an advising program.
- Reward higher performing schools
 - In-or-out models such as the California model were disliked because of the harm to students and the cliff effect
 - Adjustments based on positive attributes such as number of Pell recipients was better received but no particular methodology was identified.



After viewing over 100 scenario components and completed scenarios, the members of the task force were asked to list the changes that they could support and those that were completely unacceptable. While there was no unanimity of position on any change, *there were several changes that were either largely liked or largely disliked:*



Liked

- The community colleges and the private NFP institutions emphasized the need for increased award flexibility that could be achieved through more school involvement with the grant selection process
- About half the task force members indicated that the program should better accommodate the essential differences between dependent and independent students; the most common accommodation mentioned was different application deadline dates.
- Some type of additional support for MAP recipients was mentioned by several task force members. Information on borrowing, frequent meetings with academic/financial advisors, improved connections with existing sources of information and aid were mentioned.
- Several task force members mentioned institutional accountability. A few referenced the California Model or the Robert Morris proposal but most were vague on what to implement to hold schools accountable.

Disliked

- While better targeting aid to students more likely to succeed received general approval, the use of merit components, especially high school to college merit components such as HS GPA or ACT score, were almost universally disliked, with task force members believing that they would increase inequity and reduce diversity.
- Several task force members expressed concerns that the MAP eligibility formula is old and outdated, although it still does direct aid to the lowest income students. Substituting a payment table was offered as a simpler replacement for the existing formula.
- The current early suspension date was disliked by most participants.

In Summary, the task force members ...

- expressed a desire to better target aid to students without a heavy-handed and somewhat discriminatory HS to college merit component;
- wanted increased program flexibility overall and especially flexibility when attempting to address the needs of non-traditional students and workforce development issues;
- would like to see the eligibility formula updated and simplified;
- saw merit in providing support services to MAP recipients; and
- were not adverse to some institutional accountability measure.

Keep in Mind ...

- Every proposed change to MAP has to be:
 - Good for students
 - Good for taxpayers
 - Something we can administer

**A NON-NEED
BASED
COMPONENT or
CONSIDERATION
for a MAP GRANT**

*From SJR 69:
Improve the
effectiveness of
MAP grants in
enhancing
program
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These changes
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- One way to Improve effectiveness is to award grants based on who is most likely to complete
- Traditional HS to college merit components used as proxies for “likely to complete” are class rank, HS GPA, and test scores.
- These measures of potential success were rejected by most task for members because they are often poor proxies for success among lower income students from poor quality schools; and are inherently discriminatory
- Statewide application of merit component could impede some institutions’ special mission if they work with many less prepared students. Their students would be disproportionately denied aid.
- These measures tend to be “backward looking” and don’t measure the current potential for success.

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- Other measures such as interviews, writing samples, classes taken, etc. also measure potential for success but are not easily applied at the state level.
- More nuanced measures that better measure potential for success could be applied at the school level. However, grant decisions at the school level are not transparent, difficult to understand in the aggregate, and could lead to grant making that supports institutional but not state goals.

**A NON-NEED
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From SJR 69:

Basing a student's eligibility for a MAP grant, on the student's ability to demonstrate that s/he is making progress

- Year-to-year merit components could also enhance program completion. Current SAP policy has been tightened by the federal government; it is too soon to see the impacts of the changes.
- SAP requirements greater than the federal government's could also be imposed, although some task force members expressed concern about possible administration problems.

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Some "efficiency" components generally rejected by the task force were not paying for remedial courses or courses withdrawn from or failed.

- Not paying for remedial classes would disproportionately affect the lowest income and minority students.
- There is also the difficulty of identifying what is a remedial course.
- Not paying for failed or withdrawn courses could result in unpaid balances that prohibit students from registering for the next term or transferring to other schools.
- This could especially hinder independent students who sometimes must drop classes or withdraw from a term because of family or financial issues.

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Basing a student's eligibility for a MAP grant, on the student's ability to demonstrate that s/he is making progress

- One pace requirement that task force members seemed to support was to institute a one-year “time-out” for students who flunk out of one school and then attempt to enroll at another.
- The pattern is usually failure at a four-year school and subsequent enrollment in a community college.
- Data show that this attendance pattern rarely results in completion of any type of credential.

Increasing Program Flexibility

From SJR 69:
improve partnerships between state and institutions in delivering both financial assistance and academic support to MAP recipients

- The most frequently mentioned need for flexibility was multiple deadline dates to accommodate the needs of independent students
- Multiple deadlines can be instituted at the state level but can be more refined at the school level.
- Multiple deadlines are not transparent, can be confusing, and may not always be fair.

Increasing Program Flexibility

From SJR 69:
improve partnerships between state and institutions in delivering both financial assistance and academic support to MAP recipients

Giving more flexibility to schools could have positive benefits in several areas:

- Schools likely to spend the appropriation down to last dollar.
- Grants can be awarded on criteria too cumbersome to be used at state level such as returning students first, giving preference to certain programs of study; or complex academic criteria

But there are problems with increased flexibility:

- Lack of transparency and
- The potential for state dollars to further school, not state, goals.

Update and simplify MAP eligibility calculation

- Despite being very old (some variables haven't changed since 2002), the MAP formula does drive the MAP dollars down to the neediest students.
- However, it is cumbersome, ugly and difficult to understand and explain to others.
- Some task force members recommended we switch to a payment table.
- ISAC is concerned about an EFC-based payment table because of the negative impact on students who work.

Task force members saw merit in providing support services to MAP recipients

From SJR 69:
improve partnerships between state and institutions in delivering both financial assistance and academic support to MAP recipients

and

Basing institutional eligibility for MAP grants, on an institution's ability to demonstrate that it is a partner with this state and the institution is providing financial aid to students from its own resources

- While task force members proposed additional support for MAP recipients, they were not clear as to the type or frequency of support.
- Other state programs indicate that additional support for grantees results in higher graduation rates; but the cost per student can be high. One CUNY program that is successful is spending an additional \$6,000 per student on support.
- State programs might be able to reinforce school efforts.

Adding an Accountability Measure

From SJR 69:
improve
partnerships
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and institutions
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academic
support to MAP
recipients

- There was some support expressed for the “California Model” – excluding schools from the MAP program on the basis of 3-year CDRs, Graduation Rates and % of students with loans.
- Programs such as these tend to create cliffs; harm students attending these schools and create the potential for confusion and lawsuits.
- These programs can be modified to incent certain behaviors without eliminating schools from the program.

A Possible Framework for MAP

- We incorporate a flexible, school-based component into MAP
 - Would allow schools to make some awards based on its own criteria
 - More nuanced merit criteria could be employed such as interviews, or specific courses attempted
 - Other criteria such as participation in workforce development programs or returning students could also be employed

A Possible Framework for MAP

- Schools would have to provide benchmark diversity data and provide other data as requested
- Schools would have to provide a description of the criteria used for selection.
- Allocations by school could change over time using factors approved by task force.

Advantages of flexible MAP

- Schools will likely spend their allotments down to the penny which is getting harder for ISAC to do now.
- The program could address the issue of merit in a more nuanced way. Schools will be able to use more complicated methodologies that are unworkable at the state level, to determine who gets aid. Other measures of academic potential can be used; or returning students can be given preference, or awards can be given first to those with a declared major.
- Any merit component instigated will at least be stratified by school choice.

Disadvantages of flexible MAP

- The MAP distribution mechanism is not transparent and the certainty of receiving an award is reduced;
- it may not be a more fair distribution of dollars as some funds may find their way to higher income students at the expense of lower income students;
- it may not be more efficient. some schools may attempt to use the dollars to keep a particular student in their particular institution - not a state goal. These dollars are spent inefficiently – instead of using resources to encourage lower income students to attend college and keep students instate.
- Connecticut, which has run a campus-based program for many years, evaluated the success of its program for private schools and found that 37% of the Pell-eligible students received aid while 36% of students from families with EFCs of \$10,000 to \$20,000 were receiving aid and 6% of those with EFCs above \$20,000 also received grants.